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The Provincetown plays. Second  
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# THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

## SECOND SERIES:

**Freedom:** *John Reed*

**Enemies:** *Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood*

**Suppressed Desires:**

*George Cram Cook and Susan Glaspel*



RANK SHAY, *Publisher* 1916


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THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS  
SECOND SERIES





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NEW YORK

FRANK SHAY

1916

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# **FREEDOM**

A Prison Play

By John Reed

# Freedom

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By JOHN REED

As Produced by the Provincetown Players,  
New York City

TRUSTY . . . . .	B. J. O. NORDFELDT
THE POET . . . . .	FLOYD DELL
FIRST GUARD . . . . .	DAVID CUMMINGS
THE ROMANCER . . . . .	HARRY KEMP
SMITH . . . . .	LEW PARRISH
SECOND GUARD . . . . .	FRANK SHAY

TIME: *The Present*

PLACE: *Sweetwater Penitentiary*

Directed by Arthur Hohl

Staged by B. J. O. Nordfeldt

## Freedom

*SCENE: The Trusty's cell in Sweetwater Penitentiary. Entrance rear center, a heavy door opening inward, upon the outside of which can be seen heavy bars and bolts, just now standing open. A window, hung with white dimity curtains, to the left; beneath it, a wooden chest, and a white enameled wash-stand; a cot-bed, very white and virginal, to the right. In a rocking-chair, center, beside a small table on which perches a lamp, sits an elderly bent man, in prison stripes, wearing a pair of horn spectacles and reading the Bible. The GUARD appears at the door, jangling a bunch of keys.*

TRUSTY: Ah, Mr. Thompson.

GUARD: (*Genially.*) Twelve o'clock, buddy. Lights out. Midnight for you, says the Warden.

TRUSTY: (*Reading from the Bible.*): Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. Ah, Mr. Thompson, how true that is! Look at me. Mr. Thompson—the Lord has indeed taken vengeance. And I know—I *know* that my Redeemer liveth. He moves in a mysterious way . . . I declare to goodness He does.

GUARD: (*Sententiously.*) Right for you. There ain't any crime without punishment. That's one thing this here



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

penitentiary has learned *me* . . . It's better to live straight—then you'll be on the safe side.

TRUSTY: Ah, if *I* had only served a term as guard in a penitentiary! I think that all human beings should serve as guards in a penitentiary. . . .

GUARD: Well, sir, it surely makes you think straight. . . .

TRUSTY: How I respect free men. How wise they must be to know the difference between good and evil. And you, Mr. Thompson, you are not only good enough to be free, but you are chosen out of all your fellows to guard evil men. What a good man you must be, Mr. Thompson!

GUARD: (*Simply, with dignity.*) I have always kept within the Law. . . .

TRUSTY: The Law! Surely it must be a revelation from on high!

GUARD: (*Proudly.*) No sir. Man made the Law without any help from God whatever. (*Trusty looks shocked.*) Not that I don't believe in religion myself—in *its place*. But it hasn't got no business monkeying with the Law. . . .

TRUSTY: And yet you go to church. I see you every morning in the chapel. . . .

GUARD: I'm hired to see that the prisoners get the proper religious influences. (*He reaches in and pulls the door almost shut.*) How about that light, now?

(*Trusty. He rises, laying the Bible reverently on the table. At this moment a large block of stone heaves out*

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

*of the wall, falling silently on the bed. A head and shoulders appear, and a hand aiming a revolver. Trusty turns around in the act of yawning, sees the gun, and stands petrified.)*

GUARD: (*Swinging open the door again.*) Well, well, what's the matter with you? (*Trusty doesn't answer.*) Do you want me to put it out for you?

TRUSTY: (*Quickly.*) No, no. (*He blows out the light. Darkness.*)

GUARD: I don't want to be kept waiting around here again, old hoss. Next time, lights out when I say so.

(*Grumbling, he slams the door; bolts and bars can be heard falling into place.*)

ROMANCER: (*In the hole.*) Don't move! One step, damn you, and I'll blow you so full of holes you can't hold water! Light that candle! And light it damn quick, too! Hey! Stop moving! Did you hear what I said?

(*Trusty stops dead.*)

ROMANCER: Look here, friend! Did you hear me tell you to light that candle?

TRUSTY: Y—yes sir, but how—

ROMANCER: (*Thundering.*) Don't dare move! Light that candle! Stop moving, damn you!

VOICE OF SMITH: Well, how's he going to light the light if you don't let him move?

ROMANCER: (*Hesitating.*) That's true.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

(*To Trusty.*) Here you. Scratch a match on the ceiling so I can see you. There. (*Trusty does so. The candle lighted, there emerge from the hole the Romancer, the Poet and Smith, in the order named. The Romancer carries a bundle, which he tosses on the bed. Trusty retreats before these apparitions.*)

ROMANCER: (*Sidling down front, and keeping Trusty carefully covered. Hissing.*) Up with your hands.

TRUSTY: What for? I haven't any weapons.

ROMANCER: (*Snarling.*) Up with your hands, I say! (*Trusty obeys.*) I know that trick, my hearty. I've half a mind to blow your head off. . . .

SMITH: (*Disgusted.*) Aw, like Hell you have. What, and wake up the whole prison? That would be a smart thing to do.

POET: That's a nice way to talk. Don't you see you're ruining the dramatic effect?

ROMANCER: (*Lowering his gun.*) Yes. What's the matter with you? Ain't we desperate men? Well then. Would we stop at anything? Give me Liberty or give me—

POET: (*Clasping his hands.*) Liberty! How I feel the wind in my hair at the sound of that name! Freedom! Liberty!

SMITH: Same thing here exactly. What I want to do is to get out. (*Trusty has let his hands drop, and is looking at them in amazement.*)



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

ROMANCER: (*Harshly.*) Look here, stranger. If you don't hold up those hands I'll perforate you. (*Trusty jerkily raises his hands.*) Search him, men! (*Smith and Poet move forward.*)

TRUSTY: (*Piteously.*) Don't. You wouldn't take 'em away from me. (*Smith abstracts from his back pocket a number of magazines, and examines them closely.*)

SMITH: (*Disgustedly.*) "Votes for Women"! What's this? Well I'll be damned if it ain't a Suffragette paper!

ROMANCER: A Suffragette—

TRUSTY: O, sir! Spare me those—spare me those! They are all I have to connect me with the outside world. My grandmother sends them to me. She is a Militant, and her name is Mrs. Pankhurst!

POET: Mrs. Pankhurst! Is she your grandmother? Fortunate being! (*He embraces Trusty.*)

ROMANCER: (*Exasperated.*) Say! What do you guys think this is, anyway? Didn't I tell you to search that man? Why, he's had a chance to shoot us fifty times!

SMITH: Well, p'raps he did have a *chance*! But he didn't have no *gun*!

ROMANCER: (*Lowering his weapon.*) No gun? Why that don't seem right. Boys, there's something wrong here. In every story I ever read, the Guard had a gun or a knife, and you had to kill him to get them away from him.

TRUSTY: Hold on there! I ain't a Guard. I'm Trusty. See the stripes? I'm a prisoner too. . . .

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

ROMANCER: (*Scratching his head. Puzzled.*) A prisoner! This is most unexpected. What are we going to do?

SMITH: (*Fuming.*) Do! Stop talking and get out. . . .

ROMANCER: (*To Smith.*) O, that's all very easy for you to say! But what are you going to *do* when nothing turns out like it *ought* to? How could we know there was a prisoner in this room? By George, if *you* had the responsibility of this escape, I guess you wouldn't talk so big!

SMITH: (*Sneering.*) I guess *that's* right.

ROMANCER: (*Menacing.*) What's that?

SMITH: Nothing.

TRUSTY: (*Eagerly.*) Are you escaping?

SMITH: (*With sarcasm.*) Naw! We're going out and kiss the Warden good-night! (*Romancer glares at Smith.*)

POET: (*Angrily.*) I have never escaped with such a common person in my life!

ROMANCER: The plot has been hatching for six months. Didn't you hear us rapping on the wall?

TRUSTY: So *that's* what it was! (*Chattily.*) Do you know, I thought it was the rats,—and I just can't *bear* rats or mice,—so I says to the keeper, I says, only yesterday,—no, I guess it must 'a been the day before,—well anyway, I was talking to him just like I'm talking to you,—he was standing about here, near the door, and I was sitting in that chair over there,—dear, dear, how it all comes back to

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me,—and I says, all of a sudden,—just like that,—“Mr. Thompson,” I says, “rats and mice is a thing I can’t stand for.” I says, “You just got to get me some rat-poison,” I says—

SMITH: (*Bursting out.*) Say, do you know what time it is? Do you know it’s after midnight? It’s going to get light pretty soon! (*Poet goes to the window and pulls aside the curtain.*)

ROMANCER: (*With satisfaction.*) Just the right time. They *always* escape just before dawn. . . .

POET: The Dawn! “Now up the Eastern sky creep Day’s rosy fingers.”

SMITH: Old stuff! Old stuff! I’ve heard that before! Plagiarizing, hey?

POET: (*Coldly.*) Not so. Quoting, sir, quoting!

TRUSTY: (*Holding out his clasped hands to Romancer.*) For eighteen years I have dreamed of this moment. Let me go with you! Ain’t it funny! Why I only the other day I was thinkin’ to myself, I was, right in this very room: “If ever I get a chance to escape,” I thought—

ROMANCER: Enough! (*He meditates, frowning.*) Hum! Not so bad, perhaps. True, we must leave no witnesses behind. I had thought of strangling you,—but maybe it can be arranged. Look here, old man. Have you the courage to dare greatly?

TRUSTY: (*Respectfully.*) Yes, sir.

POET: Does your impetuous soul chafe at prison bars?



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

TRUSTY: Yes, sir.

ROMANCER: Do you want to breathe God's free air before you die?

TRUSTY: Well, for Heaven's sake! If that isn't the very remark I made to the Warden the other morning when—

ROMANCER: Never mind! Is that a Bible? Place your left hand on the Bible—

SMITH: Aw, he's too old. He'll bug the deal!

ROMANCER: Place your left hand on the Bible and repeat after me—

POET: I beg your pardon. Repeat after *me*!

ROMANCER: How do you mean, repeat after you? Am I, or am I not, the commanding officer of this escape?

POET: That's got nothing to do with it. If you will remember, Smith here refused to swear to your oath, so *I* had to swear him.

SMITH: (*Sourly.*) It wasn't because I liked yours any better, Alcibiades. But I had to do something or else we'd 'a been back in that cell yet. (*To Trusty.*) And I advise you to do the same, grandpa, if you want to move out of here before noon.

ROMANCER: You see! It was not your oath after all!

POET: (*To Smith. Furiously.*) I never heard of such low-down ingratitude in my life! I saved you from swearing to the most humiliating conditions, and you abandon

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me thus! This is what happens when a noble mind encounters a base one!

SMITH: (*Hurriedly.*) Why don't you swear him together?

POET: (*Taken aback.*) Together?

ROMANCER: (*Eagerly.*) Yes. Why not?

POET: Why, I don't know! Why didn't we think of that before? (*He shakes hands with Romancer.*)

ROMANCER: (*To Trusty.*) Place your left hand on the Bible and repeat after us.

POET: I swear upon this Holy Book to be faithful unto death—

ROMANCER: I swear that neither poison, torture nor the knife shall make me reveal—

TRUSTY: (*Brightly.*) What was that now, again? I didn't catch—

POET: Look here! That's a rotten trick! You've gone and made yours five words longer—

ROMANCER: You're a nice one to talk! You've changed the whole oath—

SMITH: (*To Trusty.*) Swear! For God's sake, swear to anything!

TRUSTY: (*Loudly.*) I swear! I swear! I swear!

POET: (*Suspiciously.*) Do you understand the oath?

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

TRUSTY: Perfectly. Funny thing, but that reminds me of a—

ROMANCER: (*Nervously.*) Say no more. We'll believe you! To business! We have no time to lose!

SMITH: Now you're *talking*. (*To Trusty.*) Here you. Got anything you want to take along? (*Trusty begins to scurry around, opening his chest and making a little bundle of the contents.*)

POET: (*Clasping his head and coming down.*) One moment! A pencil! A piece of paper! Quick! I must have a pencil!

TRUSTY: (*Doubtfully.*) A pencil?

ROMANCER: You can't have a pencil! You've got to prick your finger and write in your heart's blood!

SMITH: What in hell do you want with a pencil?

POET: (*Exalted.*) I have a flash. An inspiration. I must write it at once. Do you know how a prisoner walks the floor of his cell in the night-time, to and fro, to and fro, like a caged animal? I shall write a great poem about it!

TRUSTY: I'm sorry I haven't a pencil. But here's my fountain-pen— (*He produces it.*)

ROMANCER: (*Shuddering.*) Fountain-pen! Ugh! how sordid!

POET: (*Taking fountain-pen. Scurrying around the room.*) Paper! Paper! (*His eye lights on the Bible.*) Ah! This will do! (*He sits.*)



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

TRUSTY: So you're a poet, hey? Well, well, well—

POET: (*With dignity.*) Do you mean to say you have never heard of Jenkins, the Prison Poet? I—I am he! My verses have appeared in all the magazines. It has been said that not since Oscar Wilde has anyone written so touchingly of Freedom. That's my line, you know—Freedom, Liberty, the Man in the Cage, the Iron Entering Into the Soul. I have an immense Public—mostly feminine—waiting for me out yonder! (*Waving his arm.*) They are getting up a petition for my pardon now.

SMITH: Why?

POET: (*Complacently.*) Why, because I am a poet.

SMITH: You need that pardon, buddy. I don't grudge you a word of it.

TRUSTY: (*To Poet.*) What did you get in for?

SMITH: Indecent exposure.

POET: (*Rising. Furious.*) I want to say right here that I will not escape one step further with this person until he apologizes to me publicly!

TRUSTY: (*Genially.*) By George! Ye know *I* call that pretty bright, I do—

POET: Bright with the loathsome phosphorescence of putrescence! Adroit as the slimy members of a specimen of saurian reptilia! Agile as the senile, blue-bottomed gibbon gibbering ineptly to his idiotic mate! If I possessed handy to my tongue the multi-syllabled, parti-colored,

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

blasting epithets to build your Phillipic, you'd fold your toga around your leprous physique, and sit down like Marius amid the ruins of Carthage—

SMITH: (*Timidly.*) Hold on, governor! You win! I don't know whether you're insulting me or not but I take back everything I ever said!

POET: (*Glaring around.*) Has anybody else got any criticism? (*Silence.*) Then I presume I'm to be allowed to complete this work in peace! (*He sits down again to the Bible.*)

ROMANCER: (*Hesitating.*) I don't seem to remember any precedent for this.

POET: (*Writing madly. In a sing-song voice.*) Lord Byron! . . .

TRUSTY: I don't remember anything about Lord Byron doing *this*—

POET: He didn't. But he might have. . . .

TRUSTY: (*Bursting into wild, senile laughter, and slapping his knee.*) He! He! O Lord! He! He! "But he might have!" O Lord! He! He! If that ain't the funniest!—

ROMANCER: (*Flourishing his gun.*) Damn you! Will you shut up! (*Trusty suddenly obeys.*) For three cents I'd drill you full of lead.

SMITH: Look here! You guys make me sick! Do you want to get out of here or *don't* you?

ROMANCER: (*Severely.*) We want to do it *right*, or not at all! If we can't do the thing properly, we won't do it.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

We're going to escape from here like gentlemen, or else we're not going to escape!

TRUSTY: That's right! A convict is known by the company he keeps!

POET: (*Writing.*) Art for Art's sake!

SMITH: This is no place for a low-brow that just wants to get out! (*Trusty is searching busily about his washstand*).

ROMANCER: (*Impatiently.*) O come on, you fellows! I'm tired of waiting around here!

SMITH: You took the words right out of my mouth!

POET: One more couplet, and I'll be with you. . . . Somebody give me a rhyme for "prison"—"mizzen," "bedizen," "arisen"—

TRUSTY: (*Suddenly.*) My God! I can't go with you!

ALL: Can't go!

TRUSTY: (*Miserably.*) I can't find my tooth-brush!

SMITH: Your *what*!

TRUSTY: Yes, you know I'm perfectly at *sea* without my tooth-brush. Night and morning I use it—I don't think I've spent a night without it since my mother—

SMITH: Well, what in hell are you going to do with a tooth-brush?

POET: (*With sarcasm.*) He's going to wear it for a collar, of course.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SMITH: (*Bitterly.*) Little casino for you, Bertie!

ROMANCER: (*Magnificently, to Trusty.*) Never mind, old man, you can use mine!

SMITH: There! That's what I call handsome!

TRUSTY: But I——but I——

ROMANCER: Not a word!—

POET: (*Leaping up.*) Eureka! It is finished!

SMITH: *What's* finished!

ROMANCER: (*Pleased.*) Read it. Read it.

SMITH: (*Furiously.*) Say, do you fellows know what time it is?

ALL: (*Holding up their hands impressively.*) S-s-sshh!

POET: (*Clearing his throat and striking an attitude.*) Ahem! Ahem! It's very rough of course. I really didn't have time to polish it. But under the circumstances I consider it pretty passionate. It is an imitation of Tom Osborne's imitation of Julian Hawthorne's imitation of Giovannitti; and it is entitled "The Pacer."

### THE PACER

Up and down; up and down; up and down

Paces the Man—in the middle of the night—

What is he thinking of? How should I know?

Listen! I will tell you!

He is thinking of getting out!

Is it not strange that he is thinking of getting out?



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It is, for he is in for bigamy!

Up and down; up and down; up and down—

(*Smith who has been listening with amazement and disgust, goes swiftly across to the bed.*)

ROMANCER: Hey! Where are you going?

SMITH: (*In a choked voice.*) I'm going back to my cell.

POET: I never heard of anything so rude!

ROMANCER: You mean you're not going with us? Why, Great Heavens, man—

SMITH: (*Standing on the bed.*) The judge sentenced me to five years, but he never said I had to listen to that stuff. (*He begins to climb through the hole.*) (*Romancer and Trusty run and pull him back by the legs.*)

ROMANCER: You mustn't leave us now. It will spoil everything. I swear to you it won't happen again.

SMITH: (*Coming down.*) Very well, if you'll choke off that human siphon—

POET: (*Much offended.*) That's what's the matter with American art!

SMITH: That's just what's the matter with it!

ROMANCER: (*Mopping his brow.*) This is very puzzling. Somehow it doesn't seem appropriate. I never heard of desperate men arguing about Art. . . .

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SMITH: Well, I never heard of anybody *but* desperate men arguing about Art.

ROMANCER: All you talkers make me sick! I'm a man of action, I am! I'm going out that window. (*Points.*) Anybody that wants can follow. (*He goes toward the bed and returns down front with his bundle, which he opens.*)

SMITH: Action at last!

TRUSTY: (*Coming down.*) What's all that?

ROMANCER: (*Busy. Crisply.*) That, my fine fellow, is the means of getting us all out of here. This is a file—

POET: A file!

TRUSTY: A *file*!

ROMANCER: (*Complacently.*) You think this is a strange-looking file. It doesn't look to you like any file you ever saw before. (*Impressively.*) Gentlemen, you will be amazed when I tell you that I made this file out of a table-knife, secretly in my cell, by grinding the edge of the knife against my teeth. It took me three years.

TRUSTY: Yes, but what are you going to do with it?

POET: (*Severely.*) Don't interrupt! Can't you see he's talking?

ROMANCER: (*Fondly drawing a bundle of rags from bundle.*) And this is—what do you imagine? It is a rope-ladder! For three years these little pieces of cloth have been smuggled in to me baked in pies. Unfortunately I

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

inadvertently ate several pieces, so that the ladder is rather short. (*He unfolds ladder, which is about four feet long.*)

TRUSTY: (*Who has grown more and more bewildered.*)  
But what's it for?

ROMANCER: After we have filed away the window bars—

SMITH: (*At the window.*) Ho! ho! Ha! ha!—

POET: Will you hush up!

SMITH: Three years! O Lord!

ROMANCER: (*Glaring.*) After we have filed away the bars on that window, I say, we shall let ourselves down outside on this rope-ladder, shoot the sentry on the wall—

TRUSTY: But there *ain't* any sentry on the wall—

ROMANCER: (*Startled.*) What?

TRUSTY: *There ain't any wall!*

POET: What do you mean?

TRUSTY: All you got to do when you get out that window is walk away. I'm trusty, see? They don't nobody guard *me*. Dear, dear! It wasn't a week ago that I was saying to the Guard—

POET: Do you mean to say that all we've got to do after we get out of that window is walk away?

ROMANCER: (*Hoarsely.*) There isn't any wall to drop down? There isn't any sentry to kill?

TRUSTY: (*Uneasily.*) Yessir! Nosir!

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SMITH: Hooray! It's a cinch! Let's be on our way!

ROMANCER: Cinch! It's an outrage, that's what it is! Here I've been working and scheming and plotting for three years, smuggling in a rope-ladder with patient, painful toil; bribing a guard to get me a revolver with my last penny. And all in vain. Three long, unhappy years all all come to nothing!

POET: Yes, but we want to get out, don't we?

ROMANCER: There is something in what you say, I suppose. You must not mind me. I shall recover in a little while. But I needn't say that I am bitterly, bitterly disappointed.

SMITH: (*Impatiently.*) Let's get along. It's getting light already—

POET: (*Slapping Romancer on back.*) Come, brace up old man. I know just how you feel. (*They move across the room toward window. Trusty however, remains behind, wringing his hands.*)

SMITH: Get a hustle on, grandpa!

TRUSTY: (*Hesitating.*) I—I've been thinking—

SMITH: That won't do you any harm.

TRUSTY: I think—perhaps—I'd better not go after all—

POET: *Not go!*

SMITH: Now what in hell's the matter with you!

ROMANCER: Is it about the tooth-brush?



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

TRUSTY: No, it's about the Bible!

SMITH: Come again! Set 'em up in the other alley!

POET: I don't know what you're talking about!

TRUSTY: Well, as I was saying to the Guard this very afternoon, "Mr. Thompson," says I, "I don't know but what the Lord's done right by me. Here I am," says I, "a trusty, a man of responsibility in this community; I worked up to it from the bottom," I says, "with the help of the Lord God and His excellent Book. What was I before I come here? A wanderer on the face of the earth, a tramp, a bum. What did the world give to me?" says I, "I had no responsibility, and no man trusted me."—

ROMANCER: What's the Bible got to do with it?

TRUSTY: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity" says the Bible; and "Ye shall not follow after strange gods" and "Never look a gift-horse in the teeth" and "Let sleeping dogs lie" and—

POET: What does all this mean?

TRUSTY: It means that I'm well enough off here. It means that I'm a man of position in this Jail, and if I go out into the world, I'll be nothing but a bum again. No sir, I'd be lost outside in the world.

ROMANCER: So be it, old man. We have given you your chance.

SMITH: (*Brusquely.*) And you have thrown it away. Farewell! I'm glad we've got that old nut off our chest. Now let's move.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

POET: One moment. What he has said stirs me deeply. I wonder if I am not making a dreadful mistake! Have I, any more than he, a place in the world outside?

ROMANCER: But your public!

SMITH: But the magazines!

POET: I have told you my line was Liberty. For God's sake how can I write about Freedom when I'm free?

ROMANCER: And thou, Brutus—

SMITH: (*Almost tearfully.*) Is everybody crazy? (*To Romancer.*) Say, are you going to turn me down, too? For Heaven's sake quit this place before you go off your nut!

ROMANCER: (*Melodramatically.*) I will! (*He clasps Smith's hand.*) We two shall go together—out into God's free air, to breathe the stirring wind of Liberty, to hold up our heads once more with God's free creatures. (*Including the others in a sweeping gesture.*) And as for you, craven trucklers that you are,—you who prefer the comfortable security of this place to the buffetings of life,—I do not condemn you, I pity you. (*To Smith.*) And now, comrade, to work! (*He looks around for his file.*)

SMITH: (*Swiftly.*) We haven't any time to lose. I just heard the four o'clock bell ring. At four-fifteen they change the guard, and all will be discovered!

ROMANCER: (*With a start.*) Four-fifteen! Then we have only fifteen minutes! My God, man, we can't do it!

SMITH: Can't do it? Why not?

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

ROMANCER: Because it takes twenty minutes to file through an iron bar! We're lost!

SMITH: (*Triumphantly.*) No, we're not! Look! (*He throws open the window.*) There are no bars!

ROMANCER: No bars! My God! No bars!

TRUSTY: That's what I tried to tell you!

POET: Why, I could have told you that!

SMITH: Hurry! Hurry! What's the matter?

ROMANCER: (*Looking at the file with a dazed expression on his face.*) I—I don't understand. There's nothing like this in all fiction. No wall, no guard to shoot,—and now, not even a little iron bar to file. (*Suddenly.*) And you knew, damn you, all the time, and you didn't tell me! (*Snarling and taking a step toward Trusty.*) I've a notion to kill you for that! (*Then stopping and gazing at the file.*) front teeth gone—for *this*!

SMITH: Only five minutes left! Say, are you coming?

ROMANCER: (*Fiercely. Turning on him.*) Coming? Of course I'm not coming, sir! What's the use of escaping from a prison you can just walk out of? No man of honor would take advantage of such weakness!

TRUSTY: That's the kind of talk I like, by George!

POET: Hear! Hear!

SMITH: (*Standing up on chair.*) Well, the difference between you saphpeads and me is that I *want to get out*

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

and you just think you do. You're playing a little game where the rules are more important than who wins. I'm willing to grant that you have it on me as far as honor, and patriotism, and reputation go, but all I want is Freedom. So, if you don't mind, gentlemen, I'll just be on my way. (*He begins to climb through the window.*)

ROMANCER: What? Do you mean to tell us you're going to play us a dirty trick like that?

SMITH: (*Astonished. Turning around.*) What do you mean, dirty trick?

ROMANCER: I mean that when we three decided that it was impossible for a gentleman to escape, you turned right around and tried to get away behind our backs. I mean that you betrayed us,—that you want to save your neck at the expense of ours!

TRUSTY: The coward!

POET: The traitor! Seize him! (*Romancer and Trusty do so, pulling him down by the legs.*)

SMITH: (*Struggling.*) Let me go, damn you! I never did anything to you—let me go? What right have you to stop me? (*They drag him down center.*)

ROMANCER: The right of a soldier to shoot a deserter!

POET: Why give him any reason? What can *he* know of honor?

SMITH: You hypocrites! Just because you aren't as free as I am, you're jealous. *He struggles.*



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

TRUSTY: Hark! The guard is changing! (*Smith almost breaks away, when the door opens, and enter two Guards.*)

POET, TRUSTY, ROMANCER: Help! Help! (*Both Guards level their rifles at the group, and Smith gives up struggling.*)

SMITH: (*Fervently.*) Thank God! At last here's somebody sane!

FIRST GUARD: What's the matter here? How did these men get in this cell?

SECOND GUARD: (*Seeing the hole.*) Here's how they got in! Whew! Jail-delivery, eh? Why, they must have been working on this hole for years. Come on there, Trusty, answer up!

TRUSTY: I will, sir. This prisoner here, (*pointing to Smith*) tried to break prison.

SECOND GUARD: All three of 'em—and yourself, too, I'll bet!

POET: We stopped him!

ROMANCER: (*Eagerly.*) Why, if it hadn't been for us, he would have got away!

FIRST GUARD: (*To Smith.*) Well, what have you got to say for yourself?

SMITH: There's not a word of truth in it. I was trying to break into a padded cell so I could be free!

CURTAIN



# ENEMIES

A Play in One Act

By Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood

# Enemies

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood

As Produced by the Provincetown Players,  
New York City

HE . . . . . JUSTUS SHEFFIELD  
SHE . . . . . IDA RAUH

SCENE: *A living-room*

TIME: *After dinner*

Produced by the Authors  
Setting designed by B. J. O. Nordfeldt

## Enemies

*She is lying in a long chair, smoking a cigarette and reading a book. He is sitting at a table with a lamp at his left—manuscript pages scattered before him, pen in hand. He glances at her, turns the lamp up, turns it down, rustles his MS., snorts impatiently. She continues reading.*

HE: This is the limit!

SHE: (*Calmly.*) *What is?*

HE: Oh, nothing. (*She turns the page, continues reading with interest.*) This is an infernal lamp!

SHE: What's the matter with the lamp?

HE: I've asked you a thousand times to have some order in the house, some regularity, some system! The lamps never have oil, the wicks are never cut, the chimneys are always smoked! And yet you wonder that I don't work more! How can a man work without light?

SHE: (*Glancing critically at lamp.*) This lamp seems to me to be all right. It obviously has oil in it or it would not burn, and the chimney is not smoked. As to the wick, I trimmed it myself to-day.



THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HE: Ah, that accounts for it!

SHE: Well, do it yourself next time, my dear!

HE: (*Irritated.*) But our time is too valuable for these ever-recurring jobs! Why don't you train Theresa, as I've asked you so often?

SHE: It would take all my time for a thousand years to train Theresa.

HE: Oh, I know! All you want to do is to lie in bed for breakfast, smoke cigarettes, write your high literary stuff, make love to other men, talk cleverly when you go out to dinner and never say a word to me at home! No wonder you have no time to train Theresa!

SHE: Is there anything of interest in the paper?

HE: You certainly have a nasty way of making an innocent remark!

SHE: I'm sorry. (*Absorbed in her book.*)

HE: No, you're not. The last remark proves it.

SHE: (*Absently.*) Proves what?

HE: Proves that you are an unsocial brutal woman!

SHE: You are in a temper again.

HE: Who wouldn't be, to live with a cold-blooded person that you have to hit with a gridiron to get a rise out of?

SHE: I wish you would read your paper quietly and let me alone.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HE: Why have you lived with me for fifteen years if you want to be let alone.

SHE: (*With a sigh.*) *I have always hoped you would settle down.*

HE: By settling down you mean cease bothering about household matters, about the children, cease wanting to be with *you*, cease expecting you to have any interest in *me*.

SHE: No, I only mean it would be nice to have a peaceful evening sometimes. But (*laying book down*) I see you want to quarrel—so what shall we quarrel about? Choose your own subject, my dear.

HE: When you're with Hank you don't want a peaceful evening!

SHE: Now how can you possibly know that?

HE: Oh, I've seen you with him and others and I know the difference. When you're with them you're alert and interested. You keep your unsociability for me. (*Pause.*) Of course, I know why.

SHE: One reason is that "they" don't talk about lamp-wicks and so forth. They talk about higher things.

HE: Some people would call them lower things!

SHE: Well—more interesting things, anyway.

HE: Yes, I know you think those things more interesting than household and children and husband.

SHE: Oh, only occasionally, you know—just for a change. You like a change yourself sometimes.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HE: Yes, sometimes—But I am excited, and interested and keen whenever I am with you. It is not only cigarettes and flirtation that excite me.

SHE: Well—you are an excitable person. You get excited about nothing at all.

HE: Are Home and Wife and Children nothing at all?

SHE: There are other things. But you, Deacon, are like the skylark—

“Type of the wise who soar but do not roam  
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.”—

HE: You are cheaply cynical!—You ought not to insult Wordsworth. He meant what he said.

SHE: He was a good man. . . . But to get back to our original quarrel. You're quite mistaken. I'm more social with you than with anyone else. Hank, for instance hates to talk, even more than I do. He and I spend hours together looking at the sea—each of us absorbed in our own thoughts—without saying a word. What could be more peaceful than that?

HE: (*Indignantly.*) I don't believe it's peaceful—But it must be wonderful!

SHE: It is—marvellous. I wish you were more like that. What beautiful evenings we could have together!

HE: (*Bitterly.*) Most of our evenings are silent enough, unless we are quarreling!

SHE: Yes, if you're not talking, it's because you're sulking. You are never sweetly silent—never really quiet.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HE: That's true—with you—I am rarely quiet with you—because you rarely express anything to me. I would be more quiet if you were less so—less expressive if you were more so.

SHE: (*Pensively.*) The same old quarrel. Just the same for fifteen years! And all because you are you and I am I! And I suppose it will go on forever—I shall go on being silent, and you—

HE: I suppose I shall go on talking—But it really doesn't matter—the silence or the talk—If we had something to be silent about or to talk about—Something in common—That's the point!

SHE: Do you really think we have nothing in common? We both like Dostoevsky and prefer Burgundy to champagne.

HE: Our tastes and our vices are remarkably congenial, but our souls do not touch.

SHE: Our souls? Why should they? Every soul is lonely.

HE: Yes, but doesn't want to be. The soul desires to find something into which to fuse and so lose its loneliness. This hope to lose the soul's loneliness by union—is love. It is the essence of love as it is of religion.

SHE: Deacon, you are growing more holy every day. You will drive me to drink.

HE: (*Moodily.*) That will only complete the list.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SHE: Well, then I suppose we may be more congenial—for in spite of what you say, our vices haven't exactly matched. You're ahead of me on the drink.

HE: Yes, and you on some other things. But perhaps I can catch up too——

SHE: Perhaps—if you really give all your time to it, as you did last winter, for instance. But I doubt if I can ever equal your record in potations.

HE: (*Bitterly.*) I can never equal your record in the soul's infidelities.

SHE: Well, do you expect my soul to be faithful when you keep hitting it with a gridiron?

HE: No, I do not expect it of you! I have about given up the hope that you will ever respond either to my ideas about household and children or about our personal relations. You seem to want as little as possible of the things that I want much. I harass you by insisting. You anger and exasperate me by retreating. We were fools not to have separated long ago.

SHE: Again! How do you repeat yourself, my dear!

HE: Yes, I am very weak. In spite of my better judgment I have loved you. But this time I mean it!

SHE: I don't believe you do. You never mean half the things you say.

HE: I do this time. This affair of yours with Hank is on my nerves. It is real spiritual infidelity. When you



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

are interested in him you lose all interest in the household, the children and me. It is my duty to separate.

SHE: Oh, nonsense! I didn't separate from you when you were running after the widow last winter—spending hours with her every day, dining with her and leaving me alone, and telling me she was the only woman who had ever understood you.

HE: I didn't run after the widow, or any other woman except you. They ran after me.

SHE: Oh, of course! Just the same since Adam—not one of you has spirit enough to go after the apple himself! "They ran after you"—but you didn't run away very fast, did you?

HE: Why should I, when I wanted them to take possession if they could? I think I showed splendid spirit in running after you! Not more than a dozen other men have shown the same spirit. It is true, as you say, that other women understand and sympathize with me. They all do except you. I've never been able to be essentially unfaithful, more's the pity. You are abler in that regard.

SHE: I don't think so. I may have liked other people, but I never dreamed of *marrying* anyone but you. . . . No, and I never thought any of them understood me either. I took very good care they shouldn't.

HE: Why, it was only the other day that you said Hank understood you better than I ever could. You said I was too virtuous and that if I were worse you might see me!

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SHE: As usual, you misquote me. What I said was that Hank and I were more alike, and that you are a virtuous stranger—a sort of wandering John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness!

HE: Preachers don't do the things I do!

SHE: Oh, don't they!

HE: Well, I know I am as vicious as man can be. You would see that if you loved me. I am fully as bad as Hank.

SHE: Hank doesn't pretend to be virtuous, so perhaps you're worse. But I think you ought to make up your mind whether you're virtuous or vicious, and not assume to be both.

HE: I am both as a matter of fact, like everybody else. I am not a hypocrite. I love the virtuous and also the vicious. But I don't like to be left out in the cold when you are having an affair. When you are interested in the other, you are not in me.

SHE: Why do you pretend to fuss about lamps and such things when you are simply jealous? I call that hypocritical. I wish it were possible for a man to play fair. But what you want is to censor and control me, while you feel perfectly free to amuse yourself in every possible way.

HE: I am never jealous without cause and you are. You object to my friendly and physical intimacies and then expect me not to be jealous of your soul's infidelities, when you lose all feeling for me. I am tired of it. It is a fundamental misunderstanding and we ought to separate at once!

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SHE: Oh, very well, if you're so keen on it. But remember you suggest it. I never said I wanted to separate from you—if I had, I wouldn't be here now.

HE: No, because I've given all I had to you. I have nourished you with my love. You have harassed and destroyed me. I am no good because of you. You have made me work over you to the degree that I have no real life. You have enslaved me, and your method is cool aloofness. You want to keep on being cruel. You are the devvil, who never really meant any harm, but who sneers at desires and never wants to satisfy. Let us separate—you are my only enemy!

SHE: Well, you know we are told to love our enemies.

HE: I have done my full duty in that respect. People we love are the only ones who can hurt us. They *are* our enemies, unless they love us in return.

SHE: "A man's enemies are those of his own household"—Yes, especially if they love. You, on account of your love for me, have tyrannized over me, bothered me, badgered me, nagged me, for fifteen years. You have interfered with me, taken my time and strength, and prevented me from accomplishing great works for the good of humanity. You have crushed my soul, which longs for serenity and peace, with your perpetual complaining?

HE: Too bad. (*Indignantly.*) Perpetual complaining!

SHE: Yes, of course. But you see, my dear, I am more philosophical than you, and I recognize all this as necessity. Men and women are natural enemies, like cat and

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

dog, only more so. They are forced to live together for a time, or this wonderful race couldn't go on. In addition, in order to have the best children, men and women of totally opposed temperaments must live together. The shock and flame of two hostile temperaments meeting is what produces fine children. Well, we have fulfilled our fate and produced our children, and they are good ones. But really—to expect also to live in peace together—we as different as fire and water, or sea and land—that's too much!

HE: If your philosophy is correct, that is another argument for separation. If we have done our job together, let's go on our ways and try to do something else separately.

SHE: Perfectly logical. Perhaps it will be best. But no divorce—that's so commonplace.

HE: Almost as commonplace as your conventional attitude toward husbands—that they are necessarily uninteresting—*mon bete de mari*—as the typical Frenchwoman of fiction says. I find divorce no more commonplace than real infidelity.

SHE: Both are matters of every day. But I see no reason for divorce unless one of the spouses wants to marry again. I shall never divorce you. But men can always have children, and so they are perpetually under the sway of the great illusion. If you want to marry again, you can divorce me.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HE: As usual you want to see me as a brute. I don't accept your philosophy. Children are the results of love, not because of it, and love should go on. It does go on, if once there has been the right relations. It is not re-marrying on the unconscious desire for further propagation that moves me—but the eternal need of that peculiar sympathy which has never been satisfied—to die without that is failure of what most appeals to the imagination of human beings.

SHE: But that *is* precisely the great illusion. That is the unattainable that lures us on, and that will lead you, I foresee, if you leave me, into the arms of some other woman.

HE: Illusion! Precisely what *is*, you call illusion. Only there do we find Truth. And certainly I *am* bitten badly with illusion or truth, whichever it is. It is Truth to me. But I fear it may be too late. I fear the other woman is impossible.

SHE: (*Pensively.*) "I cannot comprehend this wild swooning desire to wallow in unbridled unity." (*He makes angry gesture, she goes on quickly.*) I was quoting your favorite philosopher. But as to being too late—no, no—you're more attractive than you ever were, and that shows your ingratitude to me, for I'm sure I have been a liberal education to you. You will easily find someone to adore you and console you for all your sufferings with me. But do be careful this time—get a good housekeeper.

HE: And *you* are more attractive than you ever were. I can see that others see that. I have been a liberal education to you too.



THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SHE: Yes, a Pilgrim's Progress.

HE: I never would have seen woman, if I hadn't suffered you.

SHE: I never would have suffered Man, if I hadn't seen you.

HE: You never saw me!

SHE: Alas—yes! (*With feeling.*) I saw you as something very beautiful—very fine, sensitive—with more understanding than anyone I've ever known—more feeling—I still see you that way—but from a great—distance.

HE: (*Startled.*) Distance?

SHE: Yes. Don't you feel how far away from one another we are?

HE: I have felt it, as you know—more and more so—that you were pushing me more and more away and seeking more and more somebody—something else. But this is the first time you have admitted feeling it.

SHE: Yes—I didn't want to admit it. But now I see it has gone very far. It is as though we were on opposite banks of a stream that grows wider—separating us more and more.

HE: Yes—

SHE: You have gone your own way, and I mine,—and there is a gulf between us.

HE: Now you see what I mean—

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SHE: Yes, that we ought to separate—that we *are* separated—And yet I love you.

HE: Two people may love intensely, and yet not be able to live together—It is too painful, for you, for me—

SHE: We have hurt one another too much—

HE: We have destroyed one another—We are enemies—  
(*Pause.*)

SHE: I don't understand it—how we have come to this—after our long life together. Have you forgotten all that? What wonderful companions we were? How gayly we took life with both hands—how we played with it and with one another!—At least we have the past!

HE: The past is bitter—because the present is bitter.

SHE: You wrong the past.

HE: The past is always judged by the present. Dante said, the worst hell is in present misery to remember former happiness—

SHE: Dante was a man and a poet, and so ungrateful to life. (*Pause with feeling.*) Our past to me is wonderful and will remain so, no matter what happens—full of color and life, complete!

HE: That is because our life together has been for you an episode.

SHE: No, it is because I take life as it is, not asking too much of it—not asking that any person or any relation be perfect. But you are an idealist—you can never be content with what it—You have the poison, the longing for perfection in your soul.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HE: No, not for perfection but for union. That is not demanding the impossible. Many people have it who do not love as much as we do. No work of art is right, no matter how wonderful the material and the parts, if the whole, the unity, is not there.

SHE: That's just what I mean. You have wanted to treat our relation, and me, as clay, and model it into the form you saw in your imagination. You have been a passionate artist. But life is not a plastic material. *It* models us.

HE: You are right. I have had the egotism of the artist, directed to a material that cannot be formed. I must let go of you, and satisfy my need of union, of marriage, otherwise than with you.

SHE: Yes, but you cannot do that by seeking another woman. You would experience the same illusion—the same disillusion.

HE: How then can I satisfy this mystic need?

SHE: That is between you and your God, whom I know nothing about.

HE: If I could have stripped you of divinity and sought it elsewhere—in religion, in work—with the same intensity I sought it in you—we would not have needed this separation.

SHE: And we should have been very happy together!

HES Yes—as interesting changers.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

SHE: Exactly. The only sensible way for two fully grown people to be together—and that is wonderful too—think! To have lived together for fifteen years and never to have bored one another! To be still for one another the most interesting persons in the world! How many married people can say that? I've never *bored* you, have I, Deacon?

HE: You have harassed, plagued, maddened, tortured me! Bored me? No, never, you bewitching devil! (*Moving toward her.*)

SHE: I've always adored the poet and mystic in you, though you've almost driven me crazy, you Man of God!

HE: I've always adored the woman in you, the mysterious, the beckoning and flying, that I cannot possess!

SHE: Can't you forget God for a while, and come away with me?

HE: Yes, darling, after all you're one of God's creatures!

SHE: Faithful to the end! A truce then, shall it be? (*Opening her arms.*) An armed truce?

HE: (*Seizing her.*) Yes, and in a trice! (*She laughs.*)

QUICK CURTAIN





# SUPPRESSED DESIRES

A Freudian Comedy in Two Scenes

By George Cram Cook

and

Susan Glaspell

# Suppressed Desires

A Freudian Comedy in Two Scenes

By GEORGE CRAM COOK

and

SUSAN GLASPELL

As Produced by the Provincetown Players,  
New York City

HENRIETTA BREWSTER	. . . . .	SUSAN GLASPELL
STEPHEN BREWSTER	. . . . .	GEORGE CRAM COOK
MABEL	. . . . .	MARGARET NORDFELT

PLACE—*A New York Apartment*

TIME—*Today*

*A period of two weeks is supposed to elapse between the first and second scenes.*

*Reprinted by permission of the Metropolitan Magazine Company*

## Suppressed Desires

### SCENE I

*The stage represents a studio, used as living and dining room in an upper story, Washington Square South. Through an immense north window in the back wall appear tree tops and the upper part of the Washington Arch. Beyond it you look up Fifth Avenue. There are rugs, bookcases, a divan. Near the window is a big table, loaded at one end with serious-looking books and austere scientific periodicals. At the other end are architects drawings, blue prints, dividing compasses, square, ruler, etc. There is a door in each side wall. Near the one to the spectator's right stands a costumer with hats and coats masculine and feminine. There is a breakfast table set for three but only two seated at it—namely Henrietta and Stephen Brewster. As the curtains withdrawn Steve pushes back his coffee cup and sits dejected.*

HENRIETTA: It isn't the coffee, Steve dear. There's nothing the matter with the coffee. There's something the matter with you.

STEVE: (*Doggedly.*) There may be something the matter with my stomach.

HENRIETTA: (*Scornfully.*) Your stomach! The trouble is not with your stomach but in your sub-conscious mind.

STEVE: Subconscious piffle! (*Takes morning paper and tries to read.*)

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HENRIETTA: Steve, you never used to be so disagreeable. You certainly have got some sort of a complex. You're all inhibited. You're no longer open to new ideas. You won't listen to a word about psychoanalysis.

STEVE: A word! I've listened to volumes!

HENRIETTA: You've ceased to be creative in architecture—your work isn't going well. You're not sleeping well——

STEVE: How can I sleep, Henrietta, when you're always waking me up in the night to find out what I'm dreaming?

HENRIETTA: But dreams are so important, Steve.

STEVE: There's nothing wrong with me.

HENRIETTA: You don't even talk as well as you used to.

STEVE: Talk? I can't say a thing without you looking at me in that dark fashion you have when you're on the trail of a complex.

HENRIETTA: This very irritability indicates that you're suffering from some suppressed desire.

STEVE: I'm suffering from a suppressed desire for a little peace.

HENRIETTA: Dr. Russell is doing simply wonderful things with nervous cases. Won't you go to him, Steve?

STEVE: (*Slamming down his newspaper.*) No, Henrietta, I won't!

HENRIETTA: But, Stephen——!

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

STEVE: Tst! I hear Mabel coming. Let's not be at each other's throats the first day of her visit. (*He takes out cigarettes.*) (*Enter Mabel from door left, the side opposite Steve, so that he is facing her.—She is wearing a rather fussy negligee and breakfast cap in contrast to Henrietta who wears "radical" clothes. Mabel is what is called plump.*

MABEL: Good morning.

HENRIETTA: Oh, here you are, little sister.

STEVE: Good morning, Mabel. (*Mabel nods to him and turns, her face lighting up, to Henrietta.*)

HENRIETTA: (*Giving Mabel a hug as she leans against her.*) It's so good to have you here.

MABEL: It's so good to be here—with you.

HENRIETTA: I was going to let you sleep, thinking you'd be tired after the long trip. Sit down. There'll be fresh toast in a few minutes and (*rising from her chair*) will you have——

MABEL: Oh, I ought to have told you, Henrietta. Don't get anything for me. I'm not eating any breakfast.

HENRIETTA: (*At first in mere surprise.*) Not eating breakfast? (*She sits down, then leans toward Mabel and scrutinizes her.*)

STEVE: (*Half to himself.*) The psychoanalytical look!

HENRIETTA: Mabel, why are you not eating any breakfast?

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

MABEL: (*A little startled.*) Why, no particular reason. I just don't care much for breakfast, and they say it keeps down—that is, it's a good thing to go without it.

HENRIETTA: Don't you sleep well? Did you sleep well last night?

MABEL: Oh, yes, I slept all right. Yes, I slept fine last night, only (*laughing*) I did have the funniest dream!

STEVE: S—h! S—t! *Very loud. Then to Mabel: Like this*

HENRIETTA: (*Moving closer.*) And what did you dream, Mabel?

STEVE: Look-a-here, Mabel, I feel it's my duty to put you on. Don't tell Henrietta your dreams. If you do she'll find out that you have an underground desire to kill your father and marry your mother. *(bowl)*

HENRIETTA: Don't be absurd, Stephen Brewster. *Combinations*  
(*Sweetly to Mabel.*) What was your dream, dear? *||*

MABEL: (*Laughing.*) Well, I dreamed I was a hen.

HENRIETTA: A hen?

STEVE: (*Solemnly.*) A hen.

MABEL: Yes; and I was pushing along through a crowd as fast as I could, but being a hen I couldn't walk very fast—it was like having a tight skirt, you know; and there was some sort of creature in a blue cap—you know how mixed up dreams are—and it kept shouting after me and saying, "Step, Hen! Step, Hen!" until I got all excited and just couldn't move at all.



THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HENRIETTA: (*Resting chin in palm and peering.*) You say you became much excited?

MABEL: (*Laughing.*) Oh, yes; I was in a terrible state.

HENRIETTA: (*Leaning back, murmurs.*) This is significant.

STEVE: She dreams she's a hen. She is told to step lively. She becomes violently agitated. What can it mean?

HENRIETTA: (*Turning impatiently from him.*) Mabel, do you know anything about psychoanalysis?

MABEL: (*Feebly.*) Oh—not much. No—I—(*brightening.*) It's something about the war, isn't it?

STEVE: Not that kind of war.

MABEL: (*Abashed.*) I thought it might be the name of a new explosive.

STEVE: It is.

MABEL: (*Apologetically to Henrietta, who is frowning.*) You see, Henrietta, I—we do not live in touch with intellectual things, as you do. Bob being a dentist—somehow—our friends—

STEVE: (*Softly.*) Oh, to be a dentist! (*Goes to window and stands looking out.*)

HENRIETTA: Don't you ever see anything more of that editorial writer—what was his name?

MABEL: Lyman Eggleston?

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HENRIETTA: Yes, Eggleston. He was in touch with things. Don't you see him? *show*

MABEL: Yes, I see him once in a while. Bob doesn't like him very well. *(shakes head)*

HENRIETTA: Your husband does not like Lyman Eggleston? *(Mysteriously.)* Mabel, are you perfectly happy with your husband? *having*

STEVE: *(Sharply.)* Oh, come now, Henrietta—that's going a little strong!

HENRIETTA: Are you perfectly happy with him, Mabel? *(Steve goes to work-table.)* *Take (books) & Robert H. H. H.*

MABEL: Why—yes—I guess so. Why—of course I am!

HENRIETTA: Are you happy? Or do you only think you are? Or do you only think you ought to be?

MABEL: Why, Henrietta, I don't know what you mean!

STEVE: *(Seizes stack of books and magazines and dumps them on the breakfast table.)* This is what she means, Mabel. Psychoanalysis. My work-table groans with it. Books by Freud, the new Messiah; books by Jung, the new St. Paul; the Psycho-analytical Review—back numbers two-fifty per. *Have read it & say it's all right.*

MABEL: But what is it all about?

STEVE: All about your sub, un, non-conscious mind and desires you know not of. They may be doing you a great deal of harm. You may go crazy with them. *Oh, yes!* *show* People are doing it right and left. Your dreaming you're a hen—— *(Shakes his head darkly.)*

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

MABEL: (*Hastily, to avert a quarrel.*) But what do you say it is, Henrietta?

STEVE: (*Looking at his watch.*) Oh, if Henrietta's going to start that! (*He goes to his work-table, and during Henrietta's next speech settles himself and sharpens a lead-pencil.*)

HENRIETTA: It's like this, Mabel. You want something. You think you can't have it. You think it's wrong. So you try to think you don't want it. Your mind protects you—avoids pain—by refusing to think the forbidden thing. But it's there just the same. It stays there shut up in your unconscious mind, and it festers.

STEVE: Sort of an ingrowing mental toenail.

HENRIETTA: Precisely. The forbidden impulse is there full of energy which has simply got to do something. It breaks into your consciousness in disguise, masks itself in dreams, makes all sorts of trouble. In extreme cases it drives you insane.

MABEL: (*With a gesture of horror.*) Oh!

HENRIETTA: (*Reassuring.*) But psychoanalysis has found out how to save us from that. It removes the obstruction, brings into consciousness the suppressed desire that was making all the trouble. In a word psychoanalysis is simply the latest scientific method of preventing and curing insanity.

STEVE: (*From his table.*) It is also the latest scientific method of separating families.

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HENRIETTA: (*Mildly.*) Families that ought to be separated.

STEVE: The Dwights, for instance. You must have met them, Mabel, when you were here before. Helen was living, apparently, in peace and happiness with good old Joe. Well—she went to this psychoanalyzer ~~she was~~ "psyched," and biff!—bang!—Home she comes with an unsuppressed desire to leave her husband. (*He starts work, drawing lines on a drawing board with a T-square.*)

MABEL: How terrible! Yes, I remember Helen Dwight. But—but did she have such a desire?

STEVE: First she'd ~~known~~ of it. *known about it.*

MABEL: And she *left* him?

HENRIETTA: (*Coolly.*) Yes, she did.

MABEL: Wasn't he good to her?

HENRIETTA: Why yes, good enough.

MABEL: Wasn't he kind to her?

HENRIETTA: Oh, yes—kind to her.

MABEL: And she left her good kind husband—!

*very late*  
HENRIETTA: Oh, Mabel! 'Left her good, kind husband!' How naive—forgive me, dear, but how bourgeoisie you are! She came to know herself. And she had the courage!!

MABEL: I may be very naive and—bourgeoise—but I don't see the good of a new science that breaks up homes. (*Steve clasps hands, applauding.*) *Happiness*

*Scene 12*  
THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

STEVE: In enlightening Mabel, we mustn't neglect to mention the case of Art Holden's private secretary, Mary Snow, who has just been informed of her suppressed desire for her employer.

MABEL: Why, I think it is terrible, Henrietta! It would be better if we didn't know such things about ourselves.

HENRIETTA: No, Mabel, that is the old way.

MABEL: But—but her employer? Is he married?

STEVE: (*Ha Grunts.*) Wife and four children.

MABEL: Well, then, what good does it do the girl to be told she has a desire for him? There's nothing that can be done about it.

HENRIETTA: Old institutions will have to be reshaped so that something can be done in such cases. It happens, Mabel, that this suppressed desire was on the point of landing Mary Snow in the insane asylum. Are you so tight-minded that you'd rather have her in the insane asylum than break the conventions?

MABEL: But—but have people always had these awful suppressed desires?

HENRIETTA: Always.

STEVE: But they've just been discovered.

HENRIETTA: The harm they do has just been discovered. And free, sane people must face the fact that they have to be dealt with.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

MABEL: (*Stoutly.*) I don't believe they have them in Chicago.

HENRIETTA: (*Business of giving Mabel up.*) People "have them" wherever the living Libido—the center of the soul's energy—is in conflict with petrified moral codes. That means everywhere in civilization. Psychoanalysis—

STEVE: Good God! I've got the roof in the cellar! (*Holds plan at arm's length.*)

HENRIETTA: The roof in the cellar! That's what psychoanalysis could undo. (*To Mabel.*) Is it any wonder I'm concerned about Steve? He dreamed the other night that the walls of his room melted away and he found himself alone in a forest. Don't you see how significant it is for an architect to have walls slip away from him like that? It symbolizes his loss of grip in his work. There's some suppressed desire——

STEVE: (*Hurling his ruined plan viciously to the floor.*) Suppressed hell!

HENRIETTA: You speak more truly than you know. It is through suppressions that hells are formed in us.

MABEL: (*Looking at Steve, who is tearing his hair.*) Don't you think it would be a good thing, Henrietta, if we went somewhere else? (*They rise and begin to pick up the dishes. Mabel drops a plate which breaks. Henrietta draws up short and looks at her—the psychoanalytic look.*) I'm sorry, Henrietta. One of the Spode plates, too. (*Surprised and resentful as Henrietta continues to peer at her.*) Don't take it so to heart, Henrietta.



THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HENRIETTA: I can't help taking it to heart.

MABEL: I'll get you another. (*Pause. More sharply as Henrietta does not answer.*) I said I'll get you another plate, Henrietta.

HENRIETTA: It's not the plate.

MABEL: For heaven's sake, what is it then?

HENRIETTA: It's the significant little false movement once in a while.

MABEL: Well, I suppose everyone makes a false movement once in a while.

HENRIETTA: Yes, Mabel, but these false movements all mean something.

MABEL: (*About to cry.*) I don't think that's very nice! It was just because I happened to think of Mabel Snow you were talking about——

HENRIETTA: *Mabel Snow!*

MABEL: SNOW—SNOW—Well, what was her name, then?

HENRIETTA: Her name is Mary.

MABEL: Well, *Mary* Snow, then; *Mary* Snow. I never heard her name but once. I don't see anything to make such a fuss about.

HENRIETTA: (*Gently.*) Mabel dear—mistakes like that in names——

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

MABEL: (*Desperately.*) They don't mean something, too, do they?

HENRIETTA: (*Gently.*) I am sorry, but they do.

MABEL: But I am always doing that!

✓ HENRIETTA: (*After a start of horror.*) My poor little sister, tell me all about it. (*sits*)

MABEL: About what?

HENRIETTA: About your not being happy. About your yearnings for another sort of life.

MABEL: But I *don't*.

HENRIETTA: Ah, I understand these things, dear. You feel Bob is limiting you to a life which you do not feel free——

MABEL: Henrietta! When did I ever say such a thing?

HENRIETTA: You said you are not in touch with things intellectual. You showed your feelings that it is Bob's profession—that has engendered a resentment which has colored your whole life with him.

MABEL: Why—Henrietta!

*msl*  
HENRIETTA: Don't be afraid, little sister. There's nothing can shock me or turn me from you. I am not like that. I wanted you to come for this visit because I had a feeling that you needed more from life than you were getting. No one of these things I have seen would excite my suspicion. It's the combination. You don't eat breakfast;

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

you make false moves; you substitute your own name for the name of another *whose love is misdirected*. You're nervous; you look queer; in your eyes there's a frightened look that is most unlike you. And this dream. A *hen*—Come with me this afternoon to Dr. Russell! Your whole life may be at stake, Mabel.

MABEL: (*Gasping.*) Henrietta, I—you—you always were the smartest in the family, and all that, but—this is terrible! I don't think we *ought* to think such things, and —(*brightening.*) Why, I'll tell you why I dreamed I was a hen. It was because last night, telling about that time in Chicago, you said I was as mad as a wet hen.

HENRIETTA: (*Superior.*) Did you dream you were a *wet hen*?

MABEL: (*Forced to admit it.*) No.

HENRIETTA: No. You dreamed you were a *dry hen*. And *why*, being a hen, were you urged to step?

MABEL: Maybe it's because when I am getting on a street-car it always irritates me to have them call "Step lively."

HENRIETTA: No, Mabel, that is only a child's view of it —if you will forgive me. You see merely the elements used in the dream. You do not see into the dream; you do not see its meaning. This dream of the hen——

STEVE: Hen—hen—wet hen—dry hen—mad hen! (*Jumps up in a rage.*) Let me out of this!

HENRIETTA: (*Hastily picking up dishes, speaks soothingly.*) Just a minute, dear, and we'll have things so you

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

can work in quiet. Mabel and I are going to sit in my room. (*She goes out with both hands full of dishes.*)

STEVE: (*Seizing hat and coat from the costumer.*) I'm going to be psychoanalyzed. I'm going now! I'm going straight to that infallible doctor of hers—that priest of this new religion. If he's got honesty enough to tell Henrietta there's nothing the matter with my unconscious mind, perhaps I can be let alone about it, and then I *will* be all right. (*From the door in a low voice.*) Don't tell Henrietta I'm going. It might take weeks, and I couldn't stand all the talk. (*Exit desperately.*)

*Enter Henrietta.*

HENRIETTA: Where's Steve? Gone? (*With hopeless gesture.*) You see how impatient he is!—how unlike himself! I tell you, Mabel, I am nearly distracted about Steve.

MABEL: I think he's a little distracted, too.

HENRIETTA: Well, if he's gone—you might as well stay in this room. I have a committee meeting at the bookshop, and will have to leave you to yourself for an hour or two. (*As she puts her hat on, her eye, lighting up almost carnivorously, falls on an enormous volume on the floor beside the work table. The book has been half hidden from the audience by the wastebasket. She picks it up and carries it around the table toward Mabel.*) Here, dear, this is one of the simplest statements of psycho-analysis. You read it and then we can talk more intelligently.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

*(Mabel takes volume and staggers back under its weight to chair rear center, Henrietta goes to outer door, stops and asks abruptly.)* How old is Lyman Eggleston?

MABEL: *(Promptly.)* He isn't forty yet. Why, what made you ask that, Henrietta? *(As she turns her head to look at Henrietta her hands move toward the upper corners of the book balanced on her knees.)*

HENRIETTA: Oh, nothing. Au revoir. *(Exit.)*

*(Mabel stares at the ceiling. The book slides to the floor. She starts; looks at the book, then at the broken plate on the table.)* The plate! The book! *(She lifts her eyes, leans forward elbow on knee, chin on knuckles and plaintively queries.)* Am I unhappy?

CURTAIN

## Suppressed Desires

### SCENE II

*The stage is set as in Scene I except that the breakfast table has been removed and set back against the wall. During the first few minutes the dusk of a winter afternoon deepens. Out of the darkness spring rows of double street-lights almost meeting in the distance. Henrietta is disclosed at the psychoanalytical end of Steve's worktable. Surrounded by open books and periodicals she is writing. Steve enters briskly.*

STEVE: What are you doing, my dear? *hangs up hat over seat*

HENRIETTA: My paper for the Liberal Club.

STEVE: Your paper on——?

HENRIETTA: On a subject which does not have your sympathy.

*comes left.* STEVE: Oh, I'm not sure I'm wholly out of sympathy with psychoanalysis, Henrietta. You worked it so hard. I couldn't even take a bath without it's meaning something.

HENRIETTA: (*Loftily.*) I talked it because I knew you needed it.

STEVE: You haven't said much about it these last two weeks. Uh—your faith in it hasn't weakened any?

HENRIETTA: Weakened? It's grown stronger with each



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new thing I've come to know. And Mabel. She is with Dr. Russell now. Dr. Russell is wonderful. From what Mabel tells me I believe he is going to prove that I was right. Today I discovered a remarkable confirmation of my theory in the hen-dream.

STEVE: What is your theory?

HENRIETTA: Well, you know about Lyman Eggleston. I've wondered about him from the first. I've never seen him, but I know he's less bourgeois than Mabel's other friends—more intellectual—and (*significantly*) she doesn't see much of him because Bob doesn't like him.

STEVE: But what's the confirmation?

HENRIETTA: Today I noticed the first syllable of his name.

STEVE: Ly?

HENRIETTA: No—egg.

STEVE: Egg?

HENRIETTA: (*Patiently.*) Mabel dreamed she was a *hen*. (*Steve laughs.*) You wouldn't laugh if you knew how important names are in interpreting dreams. Freud is full of just such cases in which a whole hidden complex is revealed by a single significant syllable—like this egg.

STEVE: Doesn't the traditional relation of hen and egg suggest rather a maternal feeling?

HENRIETTA: There is something maternal in Mabel—love, of course, but that's only one element.

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

STEVE: Well, suppose Mabel hasn't a suppressed desire to be this gentleman's mother, but his beloved. What's to be done about it? What about Bob? Don't you think it's going to be a little rough on him?

HENRIETTA: That can't be helped. Bob, like everyone else must face the facts of life. If Dr. Russell should arrive independently at this same interpretation I shall not hesitate to tell Mabel to leave her present husband.

STEVE: Um—um! (*The lights go up on Fifth Avenue. Steve goes to the window and looks out.*) How long is it we've lived here, Henrietta?

HENRIETTA: Why, this is the third year, Steve.

STEVE: I—we—one would miss this view if one went away, wouldn't one?

HENRIETTA: How strangely you speak! Oh, Stephen, I wish you'd go to Dr. Russell. Don't think my fears have abated because I have been able to restrain myself. I felt I must on account of Mabel. It wouldn't do for her to hear you discrediting it while she was being analyzed. But now, dear—won't you go?

STEVE: I—(*He breaks off, turns on the light, then comes and sits beside Henrietta.*) How long have we been married, Henrietta?

HENRIETTA: Stephen, I don't understand you! You must go to Dr. Russell.

STEVE: I have gone.

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HENRIETTA: You—what? *Yes*

STEVE: (*Jauntily.*) Yes, Henrietta, I've been psyched.

HENRIETTA: You went to Dr. Russell?

STEVE: The same.

HENRIETTA: And what did he say?

STEVE: He said—I—I was a little surprised by what he said, Henrietta.

HENRIETTA: (*Breathlessly.*) Of course—one can so seldom anticipate. But tell me—your dream, Stephen? It means——? *away from him. Then toward her.*

STEVE: It means—I was considerably surprised by what it means.

HENRIETTA: *Don't* be so exasperating!

STEVE: It means—you really want to know, Henrietta?

HENRIETTA: Stephen, you'll drive me mad!

STEVE: He said—Of course he may be wrong in what he said.

HENRIETTA: He *isn't* wrong. Tell me!

STEVE: He said my dream of the walls receding and leaving me alone in a forest indicates a suppressed desire—

HENRIETTA: Yes—yes!

STEVE: To be freed from—— *myself*

HENRIETTA: Yes—freed from——?

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

STEVE: Marriage.

HENRIETTA: (*Crumples. Stares.*) Marriage!

STEVE: He—he may be mistaken, you know.

HENRIETTA: *May* be mistaken!

STEVE: I—well, of course, I haven't taken any stock in it myself. It was only your great confidence—

HENRIETTA: Stephen, are you telling me that Dr. Russell—Dr. A. R. Russell—told you this? (*Steve nods.*) Told you you have a suppressed desire to separate from me?

STEVE: That's what he said.

HENRIETTA: Did he know who you were?

STEVE: Yes.

HENRIETTA: That you were married to me?

STEVE: Yes, he knew that.

HENRIETTA: (*Rising.*) And he told you to leave me?

STEVE: It seems he must be wrong, Henrietta.

HENRIETTA: And I've sent him more patients—! (*Catches herself and resumes coldly.*) What reason did he give for this analysis?

STEVE: He says the confiding walls are a symbol of my feeling about marriage and that their fading away is a wish-fulfillment.

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

HENRIETTA: (*Gulping.*) Well, is it? Do you want our marriage to end?

STEVE: Well, it was a surprise to me that I did, Henrietta—a great surprise. You see I hadn't known what was in my unconscious mind.

HENRIETTA: (*Flaming.*) What did you tell Dr. Russell about me? What did you tell him to make him think you were not happy?

STEVE: I never told him a thing, Henrietta. He got it all from his confound-clever inferences. I—I tried to refute them, but he said that was only part of my self-protective lying.

HENRIETTA: And that's why you were so—happy—when you came in just now!

STEVE: Why, Henrietta, how can you say such a thing? *curry him out*  
*was sad.* Didn't I speak sadly of—of the view? Didn't I ask you how long we had been married?

HENRIETTA: (*Rising.*) Stephen Brewster, have you no sense of the seriousness of this? Dr. Russell doesn't know what our marriage has been. You do. You should have laughed him down! Confined—in life with me? Why didn't you tell him that I believed in freedom?

STEVE: I very emphatically told him that his results were a great surprise to me.

HENRIETTA: But you accepted them.

STEVE: Oh, not at all. I merely couldn't refute his argu-

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

ments. I'm not a psychologist. I came home to talk it over with you. You being a disciple of psychoanalysis—

HENRIETTA: (*Whirling.*) If you are going, I wish you would go tonight!

STEVE: Oh, my dear! I—surely couldn't do that! Think of my feelings. And my laundry hasn't come home yet.

HENRIETTA: I ask you to go tonight. Some women would falter at this, Steve, but I am not such a woman. I leave you free. I do not repudiate psychoanalysis, I say again that it has done great things. It has also made mistakes, of course. But since you accept this analysis—(*She sits down and pretends to begin work.*) I have to finish this paper. I wish you would leave me.

STEVE: (*Scratches his head, goes to the inner door.*) I'm sorry, Henrietta, about my unconscious mind. (*Exit.*) (*Henrietta's face betrays her outraged state of mind—disconcerted, resentful, trying to pull herself together. She attains an air of bravely bearing an outrageous thing. Mabel enters in great excitement.*)

MABEL: (*Breathless.*) Henrietta, I'm so glad you're here. And alone? (*Looks toward the inner door.*) Are you alone, Henrietta?

HENRIETTA: (*With reproving dignity.*) Very much so.

MABEL: (*Rushing to her.*) Henrietta, he's found it!

HENRIETTA: (*Aloof.*) Who has found what?



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MABEL: Who has found what? Dr. Russell has found my suppressed desire.

HENRIETTA: That is interesting.

MABEL: He finished with me today—he got hold of my complex—in the most amazing way! But, oh, Henrietta—it is so terrible!

HENRIETTA: Do calm yourself, Mabel. Surely there's no occasion for all this agitation.

MABEL: But there is! And when you think of the lives that are affected—the readjustments that must be made in order to bring the suppressed hell out of me and save me from the insane asylum——!

HENRIETTA: The insane asylum!

MABEL: You said that's where these complexes brought people?

HENRIETTA: What did the doctor tell you, Mabel?

MABEL: Oh, I don't know how I can tell you—it is so awful—so unbelievable.

MABEL: Henrietta, who would ever have thought it? How can it be true? But the doctor is perfectly certain that I have a suppressed desire for——(*Looks at Henrietta unable to go on.*)

HENRIETTA: Oh, go on, Mabel. I'm not unprepared for what you have to say.

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

MABEL: Not unprepared? You mean you have suspected it?

HENRIETTA: From the first. It's been my theory all along.

MABEL: But, Henrietta, I didn't know myself that I had this secret desire for Stephen.

HENRIETTA: (*Jumps up.*) Stephen!

MABEL: My brother-in-law! My own sister's husband!

HENRIETTA: *You* have a suppressed desire for *Stephen!*

MABEL: Oh, Henrietta, aren't these unconscious selves terrible? They seem so unlike us!

HENRIETTA: What insane things are you driving at?

MABEL: (*Blubbling.*) Henrietta, don't you use that word to me. I don't *want* to go to the insane asylum.

HENRIETTA: (*Stonily.*) What did Dr. Russell say?

MABEL: Well, you see—oh, it's the strangest thing! But you know the voice in my dream that called "Step, Hen!" Dr. Russell found out today that when I was a little girl I had a story-book in words of one syllable and I read the name Stephen wrong. I used to read it S-t-e-p, step, h-e-n, hen. (*Dramatically.*) Step Hen is Stephen. (*Enter Stephen, his head bent over a time-table.*) Stephen is Step Hen!

STEVE: I? Step Hen!

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

MABEL: (*Triumphantly.*) S-t-e-p, step, H-e-n, hen, Stephen!

HENRIETTA: (*Exploding.*) Well, what if Stephen is Step Hen? (*Scornfully.*) Step Hen! Step Hen! For that ridiculous coincidence——

MABEL: Coincidence! But it's so childish to look at the mere elements of a dream. You have to look into it—you have to see what it means!

HENRIETTA: And do you mean to say that on account of that trivial, meaningless play on syllables—on that flimsy basis—you are ready—(*Wails*) O-h!

STEVE: What on earth's the matter? What has happened? Suppose I *am* Step Hen? What about it? What does it mean?

MABEL: (*Crying.*) It means—that I—have a suppressed desire for *you*!

STEVE: For me! The deuce you have? (*Feebly.*) What—er—makes you think so?

MABEL: Dr. Russell has worked it out scientifically.

HENRIETTA: Yes. Through the amazing discovery that Step Hen equals Stephen!

MABEL: (*Tearfully.*) Oh, that isn't all—that isn't near all. Henrietta won't give me a chance to tell it. She'd rather I'd go to the insane asylum than be unconventional.

HENRIETTA: We'll all go there if you can't control yourself. We are still waiting for some rational report.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

MABEL: (*Drying her eyes.*) Oh, there's such a lot about names. (*With some pride.*) I don't see how I ever did it. It all works in together. I dreamed I was a hen because that's the first syllable of *Hen*-rietta's name, and when I dreamed I was a hen, I was putting myself in Henrietta's place. ✓

HENRIETTA: With Stephen?

MABEL: With Stephen.

HENRIETTA: (*Outraged.*) Oh! (*Turns in rage upon Stephen who is fanning himself with the time-table.*) What are you doing with that time-table?

STEVE: Why—I thought—you were so keen to have me go tonight—I thought I'd just take a run up to Canada, and join Billy—a little shooting—but——

MABEL: But there's more about the names.

HENRIETTA: Mabel, have you thought of Bob—dear old Bob—your good, kind husband?

MABEL: Oh, Henrietta, "my good kind husband!"

HENRIETTA: Just think of him out there in Chicago, working his head off, fixing people's teeth—for you!

MABEL: Yes, but think of the living Libido—in conflict with petrified moral codes! And think of the perfectly wonderful way the names all prove it. Dr. Russell said he's never seen anything more convincing. Just look at Stephen's last name—Brewster. I dream I'm a hen, and

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

the name Brewster—you have to say its first letter by itself—and then the hen, that's me, she says to him: "Stephen, Be Rooster!"

*Henrietta and Stephen both collapse on chair and divan.*

MABEL: I think it's perfectly wonderful! Why, if it wasn't for psychoanalysis you'd never find out how wonderful your own mind is!

STEVE: (*Begins to chuckle.*) Be Rooster, Stephen, Be Rooster!

HENRIETTA: You think it's funny, do you?

STEVE: Well, what's to be done about it? Does Mabel have to go away with me?

HENRIETTA: Do you *want* Mabel to go away with you?

STEVE: Well, but Mabel herself—her complex—her suppressed desire—!

HENRIETTA: Mabel, are you going to insist on going away with Stephen?

MABEL: I'd rather go with Stephen than go to the insane asylum!

HENRIETTA: For Heaven's Sake, Mabel, drop that insane asylum! If you *did* have a suppressed desire for Stephen hidden away in you—God knows it isn't hidden *now*. Dr. Russell has brought it into consciousness—with a vengeance. That's all that's necessary to break up a complex. Psychoanalysis doesn't say you have to *gratify* every suppressed desire.

## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

STEVE: (*Softly.*) Unless it's for Lyman Eggleston.

HENRIETTA: (*Turning on him.*) Well, if it comes to that, Stephen Brewster, I'd like to know why that interpretation of mine isn't as good as this one? Step, Hen!

STEVE: But Be Rooster! (*He pauses, chuckling to himself.*) Step-Hen B-rooster and Henrietta. Pshaw, my dear, Doc Russell's got you beat a mile! (*He turns away and chuckles.*) Be rooster!

MABEL: What has Lyman Eggleston got to do with it?

STEVE: According to Henrietta's interpretation, you, the hen, have a suppressed desire for Lyman Eggleston, the egg.

MABEL: Henrietta, I think that's indecent of you! He is bald as an egg and little and fat—the idea of you thinking such a thing of me!

HENRIETTA: Well, Bob isn't little and bald and fat! Why don't you stick to your own husband? (*Turns on Stephen.*) What if Dr. Russell's interpretation has got mine "beat a mile"? (*Resentful look at him.*) It would only mean that Mabel doesn't want Eggleston and does want you. Does that mean she is to have you?

MABEL: But you said Mabel Snow——

HENRIETTA: Mary Snow!! You're not as much like her as you think—substituting your name for hers! The cases are entirely different. Oh, I wouldn't have believed this of you, Mabel. I brought you here for a pleasant visit——



## THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

thought you needed brightening up—wanted to be nice to you—and now you—my husband—you insist—(*Begins to cry. Makes a movement which brushes to the floor some sheets from the psychoanalytical table.*)

STEVE: (*With solicitude.*) Careful, dear. Your paper on psychoanalysis! (*Gathers up sheets and offers them to her.*)

HENRIETTA: (*Crying.*) I don't want my paper on psychoanalysis! I'm sick of psychoanalysis!

STEVE: (*Eagerly.*) Do you mean that, Henrietta?

HENRIETTA: Why shouldn't I mean it? Look at all I've done for psychoanalysis—and—what has psychoanalysis done for me?

STEVE: Do you mean, Henrietta, that you're going to stop ~~taking~~ psychoanalysis?

*talking*  
HENRIETTA: Why shouldn't I stop talking it? Haven't I seen what it does to people? Mabel has gone crazy about psychoanalysis! (*At the word "Crazy" Mabel sinks with a moan into the armchair and buries her face in her hands.*)

HENRIETTA: I'm done with it!

STEVE: (*Solemnly.*) Do you swear never to wake me up in the night to find out what I'm dreaming?

HENRIETTA: Dream what you please—I don't care what you're dreaming.

STEVE: Will you clear off my work table so that the

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Journal of Morbid Psychology doesn't stare me in the face when I'm trying to plan a house?

HENRIETTA: (*Pushing a stack of periodicals off the table.*) I'll burn the Journal of Morbid Psychology!

STEVE: My dear Henrietta, if you're going to separate from psychoanalysis, there's no reason why I should separate from you. (*They embrace ardently. Mabel lifts her head and looks at them woefully.*)

MABEL: (*Jumping up and going toward them.*) But what about me? What am I to do with my suppressed desire?

STEVE: (*With one arm still around Henrietta, gives Mabel a brotherly hug.*) Mabel, you just keep right on suppressing it.

CURTAIN

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